

*Strengthening Relationships, the Government of Alberta's Aboriginal Policy Framework* outlines government policy and guides Alberta's relations with Aboriginal people. It is a unique policy statement in that it applies across all Alberta ministries.

Within the *APF*, the Government of Alberta commits to working with Aboriginal people, other governments, industry and other interested parties toward:

- 1) individual and community well-being and self-reliance and
- 2) clarification of federal, provincial and Aboriginal roles and responsibilities.

The first goal is intended to address the gap in living standards between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Albertans, through capacity-building and increasing Aboriginal participation in the economy. The second goal challenges the Alberta government to

work with First Nations and Metis leaders to encourage the federal government to fulfil its responsibilities to Aboriginal people and to support the development of Aboriginal self-government.

Implementation of the *APF* requires partnerships between the Province, the Aboriginal community, other governments and industry. ♦

# Aboriginal

## framework news

VOL. 2 ISSUE 1 • Spring 2003

### inside this issue

- 1 Gift Lake: A new approach to business
- 2 Message from Minister Pearl Calahasen
- 2 Facts and figures
- 3 Dr. Lindsay Crowshoe: Personal sacrifice for the greater good
- 4 Alberta Transportation: Contracting with communities for road construction
- 4 Service Alberta's new Aboriginal services bundle
- 5 Best practices are best recorded
- 5 Friendship Centres show respect
- 6 Working together to protect wetlands: The Hay-Zama Committee
- 7 Get paid to learn
- 8 Hip hop to the top

## Gift Lake: A new approach to business

Gift Lake Metis Settlement is approaching business a little differently these days, say Settlement business leaders over tea at the High Prairie Inn, which is located about 75 km southwest of Gift Lake in Alberta's north. The Inn, one of their more successful ventures, is an important meeting place for many of the area's decision-makers and administrators.

Gift Lake's early focus was strictly on job creation, but now it's thinking more about running viable businesses, saving money for good investments, and building a fund for its future, says Hector Lamouche, Chairman of the Gift Lake Metis Settlement. That means making good day-to-day decisions that will benefit all 991 Gift Lake residents over the long term.

The Settlement's first venture, **Gift Lake Development Corporation (GLDC)**, was formed in 1983 to meet the

local demand for lease and line clearing, road construction and other work—opportunities that were previously lost to outside contractors.

"We've come a long way. GLDC has earned a good reputation over the past 20 years and is as competitive and efficient as any other contractor," says Lamouche.

GLDC now employs anywhere from four to 40 people at a time, depending on the number and type of projects that come in, says Sam Hall, Gift Lake Settlement Administrator.

At the end of February 2003, 40 are at work on a seismic program and are likely crossing their fingers about their latest project, he says. They have an agreement to do line-clearing for Navigo Energy Inc., a Calgary-based oil and gas company whose drillers have made a significant oil discovery at Gift Lake.

"We've had a very positive working relationship with the Gift Lake community," says Ken McNeill, Senior Vice President of Business

To keep these businesses going, we have to adopt a business model that is more entrepreneurial. It's not about job creation at any cost anymore. We need to be reasonable about every expenditure. Then when a sure bet comes along, we can invest in it.

—Hector Lamouche, Chair of the Gift Lake Metis Settlement

continued on page 7



## A new season at AAND

Welcome to the Spring 2003 issue of *Aboriginal Framework News*. Our work on achieving the objectives of the *Aboriginal Policy Framework* has not been subdued by a cold and snowy winter and, appropriately, you will find a lot of stories to warm your spirits!

Our opening feature tells of Gift Lake Metis Settlement's new approach to business and about a very promising relationship being developed between the Gift Lake community and Navigo Energy Inc.

Next we profile a Piikani Nation hero—Dr. Lindsay Crowshoe—who is contributing far beyond his 34 years to help reform health-care for Aboriginal people in Alberta.

Across government, you will learn of progress by Alberta Transportation in its role in implementing the Aboriginal Policy Initiative.

Another government offering is the new Service Alberta website to help you find Aboriginal resources and links that were once difficult to locate (see page 4).

In December 2002, I finished a tour of Alberta Friendship Centres. We've included a story on Pincher Creek's Napi Friendship Centre that was honoured that month.

An exciting new publication is the *Best Practices Handbook for Traditional Use Studies*, a two-year project which resulted in effective working relationships across government, industry and Aboriginal communities.

Our Hay-Zama Committee story highlights an example of collaboration between groups with diverse interests.

We encourage you to apply soon for the Belcourt Brosseau Métis Awards for post-



secondary education. And finally, we end with an "upbeat" story about a group of young people who are finding fame without formal musical training.

Success stories of individuals and partners in business and beyond are not hard to find in Alberta. We welcome you to contact us with ideas for upcoming issues! \*

### facts and figures

- Between 1981 and 1996, the number of Aboriginal-owned businesses in Canada grew by 210 per cent.

Source: Conference Board of Canada, 1996

- Aboriginal youth are 2.5 times more likely to be entrepreneurs than Canadian youth in general.

Source: 1996 Census of Canada

### Aboriginal-owned businesses in Alberta

**Bosgoed Project Consultants (BPC) Ltd.** provides consulting engineering, project management and design-build (pipeline and telecommunications) services across Western Canada. Since 1993, Bosgoed has worked for over 100 First Nations and provided employment to more than 400 First Nations people.

12 - 30 employees, 11 years in business  
Call **(780) 424-2430** in Edmonton  
or **(403) 262-3649** in Calgary  
or visit **www.bosgoedprojects.com**

**Brainhum Corporation** is a 90%-Aboriginal-owned company that focuses on Internet development, program creation, fundraising, evaluation, knowledge management, and strategic management services.

5 employees, 7 years in business (formerly Abtechs Digital Solutions; incorporated Brainhum Corporation in 2001)  
Call (toll free) **1-888-779-7971** (Edmonton)  
or visit **www.brainhum.com**

**Peace Hills Trust**, wholly owned by the Samson Cree Nation, delivers financial services throughout most regions of Canada. Although focusing on

serving First Nations and their members, corporations, institutions, and associations both on- and off-reserve, Peace Hills also serves non-native clientele.

123 employees, 23 years in business  
Call **(780) 421-1606**  
or visit **www.peacehills.com**

### Do you know about an Aboriginal-owned business in Alberta?

Send an email ([aandweb@inter.gov.ab.ca](mailto:aandweb@inter.gov.ab.ca)) with a brief description of the business, the number of employees, the number of years in business, and contact information. We may profile it in an upcoming issue of AF News.



# Dr. Lindsay Crowshoe

## Personal sacrifice for the greater good

Dr. Lindsay Crowshoe has a crystal clear vision for Aboriginal healthcare reform in Alberta—one that might better fit someone 20 years older. He's only 34. But he's already become a well-regarded medical doctor and academic and received a prestigious National Aboriginal Achievement Award (2001) for his efforts.

There's no time to waste, suggests his heavy schedule. He practises primary care medicine on-reserve two days a week. He has a full-time faculty position teaching Aboriginal health research at the University of Calgary, a role that includes creating an admissions policy for students entering medical school and helping to create a model for health service delivery to Aboriginal communities.

Healing comes from communication, interaction, and integration of worries and fears. It's the whole patient-doctor interaction that brings the person comfort and healing.

— Dr. Lindsay Crowshoe

He also works with the Calgary Health Region one day a week, where he's helping to create the medical component of an urban Aboriginal health centre.

His energy comes from his conviction about such matters. "I think there's huge potential for improving health by improving the way we do things.... We need to re-integrate ourselves. As service providers, we are very disconnected within the community."

He laments the lack of organization in delivery of all healthcare—Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal—and the undefined relationships doctors have with other service providers like social workers, policymakers, lawyers, child welfare workers, and all the people that patients with complex cases might require to begin to recover their health.

Aboriginal people could be the biggest victims of the disconnect, says Crowshoe, because "they often start out with bigger health and social issues than others."

His burning question since launching his medical practice has been "How do I make a difference as an individual practitioner if I'm so disconnected to other service providers?" And how does any doctor who gives each patient 10-15 minutes per visit begin to discover the overwhelming complexities of some cases.

Crowshoe's simple answers? Spend more time with each patient and have a whole team meet face to face about the complex cases. He already spends more time with each patient—usually 20-40 minutes—and sacrifices a huge chunk of his yearly salary doing so. To him, it's an ethical issue.

Crowshoe believes true healing rarely comes from a quick diagnosis and a prescription. "It comes from communication, interaction, and integration of worries and fears. It's the whole patient-doctor interaction that brings the person comfort and healing."

He would like to see ten patients in a day, then sit down to discuss the most complex cases with service providers who can pick up where

some of the physical symptoms end. For example, he says, "I could get a social worker to follow up with them, or whatever practitioner that person needs most."

Dr. Crowshoe is changing attitudes. "What I find really interesting is teaching non-native medical students and residents how to interact with Aboriginal people," he says. "To improve Aboriginal people's health, we need excellence in service... and in the interaction that so often becomes a barrier."

He says medical training can make a doctor view any patient as a technician does. Like a machine, or a sum of body parts or symptoms. Add to that equation the typical stereotypes that many have against natives, he says, and it's amazing any Aboriginal person can find help at all.

"I have seen the biases every day in my practice," says Crowshoe, "and if I can help increase the capacity for healthcare, for when practitioners see an Aboriginal person, hopefully they can follow the same path of ethical treatment."

His Aboriginal "culture training" usually ends up at camp, with tipis, powwow drumming, traditional stories, visits from Elders, games, and theatre—all just different ways to change mindsets. "I want students to see us as people again," he says, "and to give my students an enhanced world view."

Dr. D. Grant Gall, Dean of the U of C's Faculty of Medicine, is thrilled with Dr. Crowshoe's work. "I see him as a link in two directions. First, he can teach medical students and residents about Aboriginal culture. Second, he brings tremendous awareness to Aboriginal people about important opportunities and issues around healthcare. He knows best what will catch their attention." Dr. Gall calls him an "outstanding individual."

Are Dr. Crowshoe's motives always altruistic? No, he insists. "I'm doing much of this just to have a better job. I want to come every day and have it be easy to work." Whatever his motive, Dr. Crowshoe is making great strides for a lot of Aboriginal people who need better medical care and attention. \*



Dr. Lindsay Crowshoe



# Contracting with communities for road construction

Alberta Transportation is pleased to be a partner in the cross-ministry Aboriginal Policy Initiative (API). We participate on the API committee, the economy sub-committee, and the Deputy Minister Consultation Task Group.

Before adoption of the *APF* in 2000, the Capital Planning and Aboriginal Affairs Branch was created to develop Aboriginal policy for Transportation, co-ordinate the API for the department, and lead negotiations for new major roadway developments through First Nations communities. The Branch also serves as key contact to the Metis Settlements General Council on infrastructure issues.

It was our goal, with other Ministries, "to explore opportunities to expand the involvement of Aboriginal peoples in providing resources for ministry projects undertaken on their lands." This was reflected in subsequent department business plans.

Transportation's 2001-02 API strategy was to "increase the percentage of transportation contracts on Aboriginal lands that include an Aboriginal content clause for the supply of labour, equipment and material resource supply."

In the 2000 construction season, the first in which we tracked Aboriginal content in department contracts, ten transportation contracts and three civil projects (for water management infrastructure, such as the St. Mary Dam, pictured at right) occurred on Aboriginal lands. Aboriginal content clauses

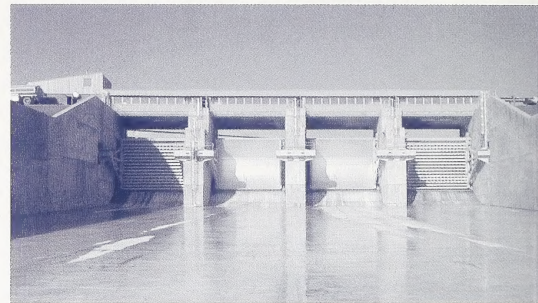
were included in four transportation projects and one civil project. During this fiscal year, \$18.5 million was spent on projects undertaken on Aboriginal lands. These projects provided economic opportunities for the Blood, Siksika, Bigstone, Enoch and Stoney First Nations.

In 2001 we made major improvements in tracking and reporting the economic benefits to Aboriginal communities. The opportunity to provide benefits depended on the specialization of the project and the First Nation's capacity to participate.

In 2001, eight of ten projects, which occurred on Aboriginal land, included content clauses for the supply of labour, equipment or material resources—a 24-per-cent increase over 2000. The total contract value was \$44 million. Two projects with a contract value of \$2.3 million did not include content clauses as they were deemed too specialized, and the Aboriginal community did not have the capacity to participate. Content clauses for labour or equipment averaged 30 per cent of the total hours worked, as first right of refusal.

Alberta Transportation was experiencing phenomenal success in the achievement of its API strategy. As a result, the strategy for 2002-03 was amended to "subject to demonstrated capacity, 100 per cent of transportation and water projects being

undertaken on First Nation reserve or Metis Settlement land will include an Aboriginal content clause for the supply of labour, equipment or material."



The St. Mary Dam and Reservoir borders the Blood Reserve.

In 2002, six of seven transportation and civil projects included an Aboriginal content clause and ranged between 30 and 100 per cent offered, as first right of refusal. Actual participation averaged 22 to 80 per cent. Total contracts for projects that occurred on First Nation reserve or Metis Settlement land and included content clauses for 2002-03 construction year were \$19.6 million.

Alberta Transportation has achieved its API objective. The department will continue to "support the API by continuing to create opportunities to involve Aboriginal people in providing resources for Ministry projects undertaken on their lands." \*

---

## Service Alberta's new Aboriginal services bundle

Have you seen the new Service Alberta link on the Alberta government website?

When you do, you'll have at your fingertips the easiest way to find all the best Aboriginal resources and services. They're now "bundled" in one place to make finding what you need easy. And, they're available around the clock.

**servicealberta**  
one stop. thousands of answers.

Go directly to [www.servicealberta.ca](http://www.servicealberta.ca) (or go through [www.gov.ab.ca](http://www.gov.ab.ca) and then click on the logo pictured above) and click on "Aboriginal People" under "Quick Links." You'll find specific information on starting a

business, children's services, education, employment, health, housing assistance, legal services, and more. Check it out!

Of course, you still have the option to call 310-0000 toll-free from anywhere in Alberta between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. weekdays to talk to a real person who can direct you to where you need to go. \*



# Best practices are best recorded

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development (AAND), with Western Economic Diversification Canada and Alberta Energy, has just released the *Best Practices Handbook for Traditional Use Studies*, in fulfillment of an *Aboriginal Policy Framework* commitment to action.

A working group, led by AAND and consisting of eight other federal and provincial representatives, facilitated the two-year project. The process included collecting and compiling best practice experiences from Elders and others with traditional use study experience. Also, considerable effort was made to meaningfully involve the three Alberta Treaty Organizations, the MNAA and the Metis Settlements General Council.

Jamie Honda-McNeil (AAND's Manager of Resource Initiatives) emphasized that the *Handbook* outlines best practices for planning, conducting, and applying traditional use studies, and is not a statement of government policy or its position on traditional use information.

A "traditional use study," according to the *Handbook*, is "designed to capture and record patterns of traditional use by

Aboriginal communities." Data collection usually involves "interviews and discussions with Elders and custodians of knowledge; historical and other types of research; and mapping and recording of traditional uses, including sites and activities."

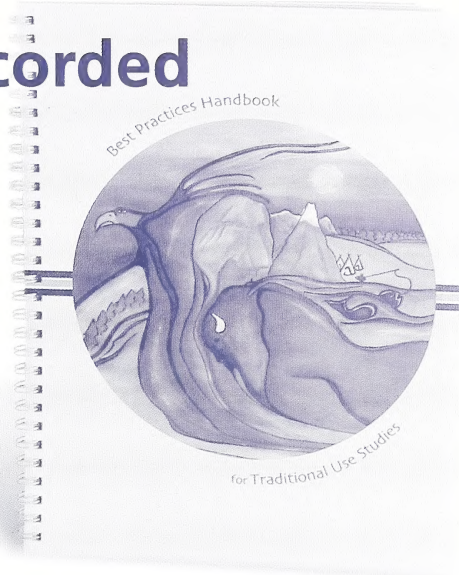
The project permitted meaningful discussions on traditional use studies between Aboriginal communities, government and industry, and culminated in a handbook that should serve as a valuable resource to those groups in the future. Intended audiences for the *Handbook* include Aboriginal communities, resource development companies, government employees, and academia.

The *Handbook* has done more than anticipated, says Denise Parsons (Planning Officer, Alberta Energy), who helped manage and coordinate the project alongside Honda-McNeil.

"It has set an important precedent for intergovernmental relationships," says Parsons. "The different groups co-operated in areas of mutual interest and concern. Aboriginal communities provided the foundation for the book—from their expertise

and experiences—and several government departments worked together to help make it happen." \*

Call (780) 427-8407 to request a copy, or print a downloadable version off AAND's website at [www.aand.gov.ab.ca](http://www.aand.gov.ab.ca). Click on *Aboriginal Initiatives*, *Economic Resource Initiatives*, and then *Best Practices Handbook*.



LISA DOERKSEN, LETHBRIDGE HERALD

## Friendship Centres show respect



Minister Pearl Calahasen completed Friendship Centre tours in December 2002. Pictured at the Athabasca Native Friendship Centre are: (front row) Alice Baron and Mary Anne Swan; (second row) Elena Jacobs, Minister Calahasen, Phillip Lamouche, and Janet Stafford; (back row) Penny Woroniuk, Noel Calliou and David Ramsden

Pincher Creek's Napi Friendship Association has been recognized for ensuring human rights are protected and respected.

"We feel good about it," said executive director Carol Specht. "It's one of the things we try to do out in Pincher Creek with the Friendship Centre."

To commemorate International Human Rights Day in December 2002, the association was honoured by the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission.

Specht said the association, which started in the late 1960s, works to create better community and understanding between other cultures—particularly Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals. "The Peigans are very close and we want to be as good a neighbour as we

can possibly become," she said. "That means we have to get to know each other and learn to respect (each other)."

The association runs several programs focusing on education, health and recreation, many designed to fill the cultural gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal society. As well, Specht says the centre has made special efforts to focus on youth. "We think that's a good place to start."

The centre runs an alternative school in conjunction with a Pincher Creek high school, and has developed a youth council to help local teens develop leadership skills.

"We teach the kids how to run a meeting, [to] prepare them to be leaders for the future," she says.

*continued on next page*



The centre also runs a multicultural daycare, which does special programming such as bringing in Elders to teach Blackfoot language and crafts, or a special diabetic clinic called Parents as Teachers and Families First.

The association's board hopes to plan a cross-cultural conference in area schools, with workshops featuring storytellers and dancers from many different cultures.

Specht wants to see all cultures in southern Alberta come together. "You can always tell if there's prejudice in a community," she said. "We know it's here and we're working to try and make it better." \*

## Working together to protect wetlands: The Hay-Zama Committee

Imagine a wetland complex where three waterfowl flyways meet—at one of North America's largest staging areas for migratory birds. The same area supports First Nations hunting and trapping and sits on top of an oil and gas reservoir.

Sound like a recipe for conflict?

The Hay-Zama Committee has proved otherwise. The committee is a good example of co-operation between government, First Nations, industry and other stakeholders to achieve mutual goals.

Hay-Zama Wildland Park covers 486 km<sup>2</sup> in northwestern Alberta (see map).

The area was first recognized as a Wetland of International Importance in 1982, under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. In 1985, Alberta's Energy Resources Conservation Board (ERCB) established initial boundaries for the complex. The ERCB also restricted access to the area for oil and gas development and outlined specific guidelines for oil and gas production.

In 1996, the ERCB's successor, the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board (EUB), issued Interim Directive (ID) 96-1, outlining the Hay-Zama complex's boundaries based on biological and hydrological criteria. ID 96-1 also identified wetland areas most sensitive to the impacts of oil and gas development and expanded special requirements for oil and gas exploration and production.

The area was designated as a Wildland Park in 1999 under Alberta's Special Places Program. It continues to be managed according to the

terms of ID 96-1 and the park's management regulations.

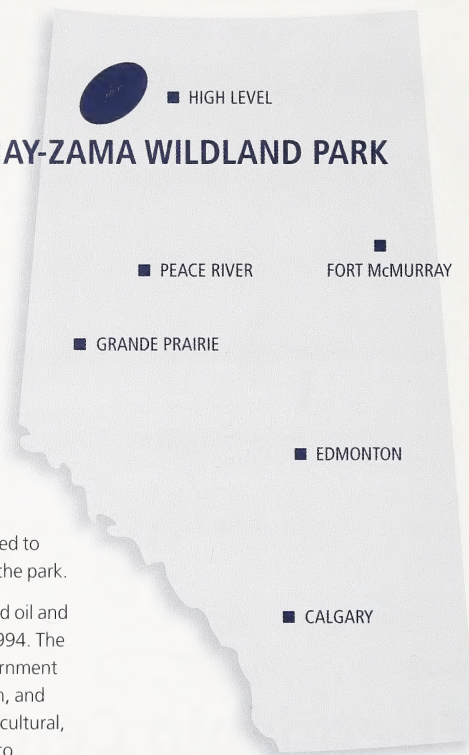
Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between the Hay-Zama Committee and industry guide accelerated depletion of the oil and gas reserves underlying the park. Accelerated depletion, to be complete by the year 2017, is intended to minimize surface disturbance inside the park.

The Hay-Zama Committee has guided oil and gas development in the park since 1994. The committee—co-chaired by the Government of Alberta, the Dene Tha' First Nation, and industry—is charged with balancing cultural, environmental and economic issues to protect the wetland complex. The committee meets in the spring and fall of each year. Additional meetings may also be held at the request of any committee member.

Ken Zurfluh, Area Manager for Alberta Community Development in Grande Prairie, is the Government of Alberta's committee co-chair. He says the committee process is successful because the members are all focused on the primary objective: protection of wetlands.

The five core members of the committee (Government of Alberta, Dene Tha' First Nation, Industry, Ducks Unlimited, Alberta Wilderness Association) participate equally in committee decisions. Over the years, committee members have developed excellent working relationships built on honesty and trust.

### HAY-ZAMA WILDLAND PARK



The committee has successfully resolved many conflicts, the most recent being a request for seismic activities in the park. The committee was able to come to an agreement that involved approval for seismic activities, abandonment of two wells, and relinquishment of future mineral rights.

Ken Zurfluh explains that this agreement was reached because all parties kept talking to each other, in spite of disagreements, until a resolution was found. This approach bodes well for the future of the committee and for the Hay-Zama Wildland Park. \*

*This story was adapted from the EUB's Across the Board story dated December 2002. See [www.eub.gov.ab.ca/bbs/products/newsletter/pdf/atb\\_Dec\\_2002.pdf](http://www.eub.gov.ab.ca/bbs/products/newsletter/pdf/atb_Dec_2002.pdf)*



Development and Land at Navigo. "It's clearly one of the best groups to work with that I've experienced. I think that has to do with the community being quite involved in the project and with all our interests being aligned."

If the oil pool is as big as expected, it could produce four or five million barrels of oil, says Hall. They'll know soon, he says, but the good news is that they've already recovered half their initial investment in the project. Gift Lake and the Metis Settlements General Council together can invest up to 25 per cent of the required capital.

The Settlement's next venture—**Gift Lake Logging**—was set up in 1996. The small operation does logging on-and off-settlement, and supplies wood to local businesses like Tolko Industries in High Prairie and to local plywood and sawmills in the area. Gift Lake Logging has also supplied some wood to the U.S. and is always looking for new, more profitable markets, says Lamouche.

Gift Lake's third business, of course, is the **High Prairie Inn**, which employs 66 people who come mainly from High Prairie. The Inn's 65 rooms, lounge, restaurant, banquet and

meeting rooms were built from the ground up about five years ago, through a partnership between the Gift Lake Settlement and two local businessmen. The Settlement bought out the partners in 2000 and is now the sole owner.

In the short term, says Hall, the Settlement must tighten its belt to have money to invest in future ventures. Now that the first three ventures are off the ground, he says, Gift Lake must make good business decisions like being prudent, making every investment a wise one, and being fiscally responsible in all its operations.

"To keep these businesses going, we have to adopt a business model that is more entrepreneurial. It's not about job creation at any cost anymore. We need to be reasonable about every expenditure. Then when a sure bet comes along, we can invest in it," says Lamouche.

He and Hall are among those working toward a higher level of reporting, accountability, performance measurement, and tracking in their operations.

Hector Gullion, in his third year on Settlement Council, agrees with this approach. He looks at the businesses as economic development



Kelly Cunningham and Daniel Belcourt, new apprentices, work on a truck at Gift Lake Development Corporation's shop.

for the members. "For Gift Lake, it's less and less about politics and more about setting up viable businesses."

For some business leaders though, it still is and always will be about the jobs. Larry L'Hirondelle, General Manager of GLDC, who's been with the Corporation since its start, says keeping Gift Lake people employed remains his number-one priority.

His vision is to expand GLDC by investing in trucks for hauling gravel, buying more heavy equipment, and employing more Settlement members.

"I still see the most important thing as job creation," says L'Hirondelle. "Right now we have 40 guys working in the bush, building roads and leases. And we're always striving to get better." \*

## Get paid to learn

Are you Métis? Do you want to go to university or college? Are you too broke to consider it? That described Daniel Calhoon of Oyen, Alberta, at about this time last year.

Today, though, it's more accurate to call him an incredibly grateful second-year mechanical engineering student who doesn't know where he'd be "if it wasn't for the Belcourt Brosseau Métis Award that has helped pay for my university."

Daniel, 23, heard about the Awards program through his aunt, who heard about it during her own nursing studies at Red Deer College.

In 2002, 38 Métis students across Alberta together received over \$130,000 toward their tuition, mandatory school fees and books. Those recipients, from 15 Alberta cities and towns, now attend 17 universities, colleges, technical institutes, vocational schools and community consortiums in



Daniel Calhoon, hitting the books in University of Calgary's MacEwan Student Centre

Alberta. Their studies range in level from academic upgrading to veterinary medicine.

Orval and Herb Belcourt and Georges Brosseau established the Belcourt Brosseau Métis Awards Fund in 2001 at the Edmonton Community Foundation to ensure a brighter future for Métis people living in Alberta. It's one of a number of endowed scholarship/

award funds established at the Foundation by individuals or organizations wanting to help deserving individuals further their education and training needs.

The Awards are not based as much on academic skill as on a desire to learn and to improve one's life.

"We want to help any Métis person who has a desire to better themselves and does not have the financial ability to do so, regardless of what level of education they wish to pursue," says Georges R. Brosseau.

Daniel Calhoon definitely has that desire. He'll apply again, because the Belcourt Brosseau Métis Awards Fund hopes to give out more awards for 2003 than it did in 2002. \*

Get your application in by May 16, 2003. Download the form from [www.dollarsforlearners.com](http://www.dollarsforlearners.com) or call toll-free 1-866-626-0015 to have a copy mailed to you.



# Hip hop to the top

## Warparty encourages Aboriginal kids to dream big

It's not just about loud music and growing fame. It's about having dreams and getting past your circumstances, says Rex Smallboy of Warparty, the Hobbema-based Aboriginal group that has taken home national awards for two consecutive years for their rap and hip-hop music.

At the 2002 Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards, Warparty won Best Rap or Hip-Hop Album for *Exclusive Rez* and Best Music Video for their single "The Reign." That followed *The Reign's* 2001 award for Best Rap or Hip-Hop Album.

Smallboy, the 29-year-old bandleader and manager for eight years, never imagined that their music and lyrics would inspire Aboriginal kids across the country. Now he, with fellow band members Karmen Omeosoo (a.k.a. Kool-Ayd the Chubby Cree) and wife Cynthia Nicotine-Smallboy (a.k.a. Girlie Emcee), will write more songs, put on more shows, and let Paquin Entertainment manage the band.

Warparty signed on with Paquin Entertainment because of their work with Susan Aglukark, Buffy Sainte-Marie, Tom Jackson and other big name Aboriginal singers. Paquin has had its own successes—like being

named "Agent of the Year" at the Prairie Music Awards for two years now.

With no formal musical training to help the band members along, Warparty's own achievements have come from hard work towards dreams based in real life... and from other people's real-life struggles.

"We're inspired by the stories from the reserves. People in the worst circumstances have had so much positive to say that they've inspired our songs. Those stories have helped us learn to let life move us."

Many of their stories have come right from home at Hobbema, Alberta.

"We love our home. Whether good or bad, our home is where we derive our inspiration," says Smallboy.

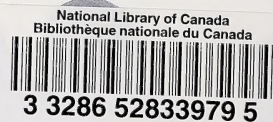
Surely other Aboriginal rappers inspired the band?

"There was none around to influence us," says Smallboy, who's interrupted by wife Girlie Emcee, Warparty's only female member.

"We are *the* Aboriginal rap group," she says with a wide grin.

That's one of *their* latest dreams—not to mention helping other Aboriginal kids realize theirs. Warparty is now putting together a workshop called "Dreams of Reality" to inspire kids to have dreams and to not let harsh realities stand in their way. \*

Check out [www.warparty.cjb.net](http://www.warparty.cjb.net) to follow Warparty's whereabouts.



### contact information

#### Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development

13th Floor, Commerce Place  
10155-102 Street  
Edmonton, Alberta  
Canada T5J 4G8

#### For general inquiries:

T: (780) 415-0875  
F: (780) 415-9548

Additional information and a copy of this newsletter  
can be found on our website: [aand.gov.ab.ca](http://aand.gov.ab.ca)